



MATCH DAY ACCESS AND FACILITIES

CAR PARKING

Where clubs provide parking for supporters (whether this is at the stadium itself or at other locations) on match days, it is likely to be a reasonable adjustment for them to provide some spaces reserved for disabled supporters.

Allocation of such spaces can be limited to those disabled people who would have difficulty accessing the stadium unless they are able to secure a nearby parking space (such as a Blue Badge holder). There may well be disabled supporters who have no difficulty with mobility and could make their way to the stadium without the need for such parking, in which case clubs would not need to seek to provide it. In any event, if demand is greater than supply then the club can allocate spaces to those who require them, on a first come, first served basis or by lottery.

There is no statutory requirement for any particular number of disabled parking spaces to be made available. However, guidance from the Department of Transport suggests the following:

CAR PARK USED FOR	CAR PARK SIZE	
	UP TO 200 BAYS	OVER 200 BAYS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees and visitors to business premises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual bays for each disabled employee plus 2 bays or 5% of total capacity whichever is greater 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 bays plus 2% of total capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to shopping, recreation and leisure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 bays or 6% of total capacity whichever is the greater 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 bays plus 4% of total capacity

Clubs are of course permitted to arrange for greater numbers of disabled spaces, and the above figures are not requirements of the DDA so that clubs may be able to justify lower percentages. However, the Premier League would recommend that, as a minimum, the guideline figures in the bottom row of the table above should be adopted, so that a minimum of 5-6% of total capacity should be designated as for disabled supporters.

As well as designating spaces for disabled supporters, clubs will also need to ensure that steps are taken to prevent abuse or misuse of these spaces, so that they are in fact available to disabled supporters. Notes of guidance issued by the Department for Transport provide that:

“PART III OF THE DDA REQUIRES SERVICE PROVIDERS TO TAKE REASONABLE STEPS TO ENSURE THAT DISABLED PEOPLE DO NOT FIND IT IMPOSSIBLE OR UNREASONABLY DIFFICULT TO ENJOY THE SERVICES ON THE SAME BASIS AS NON-DISABLED PEOPLE. THIS WILL HAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR CAR PARK OPERATORS WHO MAY HAVE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT, AS WELL AS MARKING OUT DISABLED PARKING SPACES, THEY HAVE TAKEN REASONABLE STEPS TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE AVAILABLE TO DISABLED PEOPLE.”

If a disabled person were to seek a space, but find that all the designated spaces are taken by cars of non-disabled people, then they could bring a claim and the club may need to show that they had taken steps to prevent that situation arising. The only step that is likely to satisfy this is to have stewards supervising the spaces.

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In addition to the above recommendations, clubs should consider taking other steps to improve parking and other access issues. For example, clubs could seek to arrange for 'Park and Ride' type services for car parks further from the stadium, or specify a particular area as a 'drop-off' area for disabled people.

TRANSPORT TO AWAY GAMES

There is no general requirement that a club arrange for transport for supporters to away games. If a club does not arrange transport for anyone then it is unlikely that it will be required to do so under the DDA for disabled people.

However, if a club does arrange transport, it is likely that they will need to take into account the needs of disabled supporters who may wish to take advantage of this, in two ways:

- First, as part of their general duty to make reasonable adjustments, when booking coaches (or any other form of transport), clubs should investigate whether the company providing the transport can arrange accessible transport and, where available, make use of providers who can do this.
- Second, under the new duties in relation to the provision of "transport services", providers cannot discriminate in the provision of transport by way of coaches or other hire or rental vehicles. Although this obligation will be primarily placed on the company providing the vehicle, where a club contracts with such a company it will need to ensure that the company's vehicles comply with this requirement. The new duties require that disabled people are not treated less favourably by being refused access to transport and that providers must make reasonable adjustments

to allow for disabled people to access services. However, this does not require them to make physical changes to vehicles or permanent additions to the fabric of the vehicle.

SEATING AND VIEWING: THE DUTY TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS TO PHYSICAL FEATURES

Arrangements for seating and ensuring that supporters can be fully involved in match day events will, of course, need to be planned well in advance, and some issues will need to be considered in the long term – such as the physical layout of the stadium and the number of wheelchair accessible spaces. However, clubs do have to consider these issues as part of their duty to anticipate necessary reasonable adjustments.

With regard to the physical layout of a stadium, clubs are required to make adjustments to ensure that disabled people are not prevented from accessing the services that are being provided. This can involve creating or modifying access routes for those with mobility impairments and also providing wheelchair accessible spaces and seating for ambulant disabled people.

Whether or not certain adjustments are reasonable in this context will depend on a number of factors. The extent to which it is possible to alter an existing stadium, particularly older stadia, may be less than in new-build or recently built stadia. Whenever construction work is undertaken, clubs should ensure that their DDA duties are considered.

In addition, Part M of the Building Regulations deals with access to buildings for disabled people, and these must be borne in mind whenever new construction work is being undertaken. If new construction work does meet the standards set out in those Regulations, as should usually be the case,

clubs will not be required by the DDA to make any adjustments to physical features which are dealt with by the Regulations, even if they would otherwise be reasonable, for a period of 10 years.

One particular issue that has arisen is whether wheelchair accessible spaces for away fans should be placed next to the areas for non-disabled away fans. In short, the position is that this is not automatically required under the DDA. However, it is likely to be necessary, and would certainly be prudent, for clubs to make reasonable adjustments to permit this where it is possible to do so.

The duty to make adjustments to physical features applies to all areas of the stadium and not just the general seating areas. Clubs should thus seek to ensure that accessible toilets for disabled people are available and that other services on the premises, such as food outlets, are accessible. Executive boxes, lounges and bars should also be made accessible as far as reasonably possible.

PROVISION OF MATCH DAY INFORMATION AND OTHER AUXILIARY AIDS AND SERVICES

As well as the 'core' service of providing a seat to watch a match, clubs will offer a large variety of other additional services to fans and are required to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that these can be accessed by disabled supporters.

Examples of the additional services that might need to be adjusted include:

- External signs, including for disabled parking bays, drop-off points, etc.
- Direction and facilities signs within the stadium.
- Stadium video boards.

- Tannoy announcements.
- Football commentary facilities.
- Evacuation procedures.
- Match day programmes.
- Food and beverage facilities.
- Stadium shops and merchandise outlets.

This list is far from exhaustive, and there are likely to be a number of other facilities available to supporters that may need adjustment to meet the needs of disabled fans. Clubs should ensure that they carry out regular access audits to ensure that reasonable adjustments are in place.

Taking, by way of example, match day programmes, the type of adjustment that may be required could include arranging for the programme to be available in different formats such as Braille, large print or audio tape. A number of factors will need to be borne in mind when determining what alternative formats are reasonable, including:

- Would it be feasible to produce, say, a Braille translation within the time available from the deadline for the programme and the match?
- Would certain information be capable of being transferred into alternative formats (for example, could a league table be reproduced on audio tape, and if not would it still be reasonable to put the rest of the programme on tape)?
- What would be the cost of production as against the likely demand?

Match day catering is another service that may need to be adjusted. Where catering is subcontracted, the duties under the DDA with regard to provision of the

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catering are likely to fall on the contractor. However, the club may be liable for issues relating to the accessibility of the facility – such as the need for a lowered counter.

As stated above, clubs should seek to ensure that accessible toilets for disabled people are available. Clubs should take steps to prevent use of these toilets by non-disabled people and thus ensure that they are available when required by disabled people. Toilets could be kept locked until required, although it should be possible for disabled people to easily obtain access when necessary.

Clubs should usually permit disabled people to bring a PA with them, where they require this to access the services provided. However, where a person requires assistance but does not have anyone with them, the club may be required to provide such assistance by way of a reasonable adjustment.

MATCH DAY STEWARDS

All club staff, including managers, who may be involved in providing services to the public should receive Disability Equality Training. This would include stewards, whether or not they are paid and whether or not they are employees of the club.

The club is likely to be responsible for stewards' actions, and if a steward discriminates against a disabled supporter then the club is likely to be liable for this. Stewards' training should therefore ensure that they are aware of the support available to disabled people and can either provide it themselves or direct the disabled person to the correct location to access it.

The following are some examples of assistance that could be provided by stewards. In some cases, stewards will be employed specifically to undertake this work but all stewards should be aware that they should do so where reasonable:

- Giving directions to disabled people to appropriate entry gates.
- Assisting disabled people from drop-off points into the stadium.
- Ensuring that disabled parking bays are correctly used.
- Ensuring safe crowd flow through club shops.
- Supervising access to accessible toilets for disabled people.
- Assisting access to lower counters at catering and other concourse facilities.
- Lounge stewards might carry food for disabled customers where otherwise arrangements are self-service.